



DHS Matters!

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Submit stories by e-mail to DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov

Fundraiser will help offset medical costs for DHS employee's daughter

From Tammy Elliott

Olivia Erickson Benefit Fund, Midland

Email: oliviaerickson@charter.net

A Dec. 10 fundraiser in Merrill will help offset medical costs for Olivia Erickson, the daughter of James and Tina Erickson of Wheeler. James works for Volcor Inc. in Ionia and Tina is employed at the Gratiot County DHS in Ithaca.

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2005

4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Auction at 6 p.m.

St. Patrick Ryan Church
4700 S. Meridian Road
Merrill, MI

\$6 per person

\$3, children 4 to 13

3 and under free

Olivia Erickson



A spaghetti dinner and auction benefit will be held Dec. 10 at St. Patrick Ryan Church in Merrill. The proceeds from this event will help pay for expenses related to Olivia's treatments and care.

Just one day shy of her fourth birthday on Oct. 23 Olivia's parents were told she had a brain tumor. Doctors removed some of the tumor Oct. 25 at CS Mott Children's Hospital at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

However, the tumor was malignant and they were not able to remove all of it because it was partially embedded on her brain stem. The type of cancer Olivia has is called Medduloblastoma.

Olivia started a combination of chemotherapy and radiation Nov. 14 that will continue through Jan. 9. These treatments will take place five days a week for the duration of this stage of the treatment. All treatments will take place in Ann Arbor, just over two hours from Olivia's house in Wheeler.

This means Olivia and her mom will be staying in Ann Arbor during the week, leaving Olivia's two brothers and her dad at home.

Olivia's family and friends appreciate any assistance you can give with her benefit. More information on Olivia can be found on the web at <http://webpages.charter.net/oliviaerickson>

Contact information for the event is phone (989) 689-6522 or e-mail oliviaerickson@charter.net Thank you for your consideration.

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Thanks for helping out, Karen!

From Noreen Nykiel, Social Services Specialist
Wayne County Child & Family Services Central Operations,
Detroit
NykielN@michigan.gov



Karen Brunson

We at Central Operations in Wayne County are proud to acknowledge our department analyst Karen Brunson.

Karen recently returned from the Gulf Coast after being deployed for six weeks of duty with the National Guard.

Staff Sgt. Brunson, of the 1776 MP Company out of Taylor, Mich., has served 13 years of active duty touring the world and seven years with the National Guard.

She is a wife, mother, grandmother of three and a well-respected coworker here at Central Operations. We are grateful for the service she provided and thankful for her safe return.



Date: Nov. 26
To: Pam Hammond Lewis, Family Independence Manager
Mecosta-Osceola County DHS
Subj: Kevin Nemetz

I was in Iraq (and) Kuwait over the past few days and saw Kevin (Nemetz) who works for you at the Mecosta County DHS. He is serving in the 125th Battalion in Habbaniyah, which is in the Sunni Triangle, a dangerous area of that country. His unit has sustained quite a few losses over the past few weeks including two deaths and four seriously burned soldiers. He gave me a note to tell you that he's thinking of us all back home and that he "may be late" for work upon his return from Iraq. He must be a conscientious guy! I wanted to pass the message along; I'm certain his co-workers are all very proud and supportive of him and his service to our country. Thank you for being a supportive boss as well and for serving our state at DHS in a very critical area. Thanks very much.

Jennifer Granholm

Governor

■ Kevin Nemetz is a family independence specialist with Mecosta-Osceola DHS serving active military duty in Iraq. Nemetz appears in the middle of the photo behind the governor. Mecosta-Osceola DHS director **Denny Major** submitted this letter.

Date: Nov. 18
To: William McDonald, CPS Specialist
Wayne County Western Wayne Child & Family Services District, Taylor
Subj: Sarah Hayden

It has been some time since your lengthy involvement in the case of Sarah Hayden. I just wanted you to know that Sarah is now excelling both behaviorally and academically. And that your diligent involvement to closure was a very significant factor in moving Sarah to a positive direction in her life. I can't thank you enough for your intervention and support in Sarah's behalf. I am attaching Sarah's first Junior High report card; we're very proud.

Dennis & Debbie Hayden

Dearborn Heights

Date: Nov. 10
To: **Marianne Udow**, Director
Michigan Department of Human Services
Subj: Grateful heart

It is with a very grateful heart that I write to thank you for providing staff to assist the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) with Hurricane Katrina disaster relief. As you know, the destruction from Hurricane Katrina was absolutely devastating for many families, including a large number of DHR staff who personally suffered losses. Without help from your agency, DHR would not have been able to provide timely assistance to such a large number of hurting individuals. Through the efforts of DHR staff and numerous volunteers like your staff, the department was able to certify 255,380 persons for food and/or other assistance benefits totaling \$29,046,103.

I commend you and your staff for the compassion and diligent work displayed on behalf of others during our time of crisis. Should your state face a similar crisis in the future, please call on Alabama to return your generosity. Again, we sincerely appreciate your prompt response and tremendous assistance in our time of need.

Page B. Walley, Ph.D. Commissioner
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Montgomery, Ala.

Local employer makes the holidays a bit warmer in Van Buren County

From Sue McCauley, Contract Administration & Community Resource Support
Van Buren County Department of Human Services
McCauleyS2@michigan.gov

Mattawan-based Engineered Plastic Components, a manufacturer of injection molded components for the automotive, telecommunications, medical, electronics and consumer industries, recently held a food and coat drive to benefit those in need in Van Buren County. EPC has been a valuable donor to the Van Buren Department of Human Services Children's Christmas Project for the past several years.

This year – because of the need for children's coats and food for the Thanksgiving holiday – they decided to organize their own drive. Twelve volunteers gave generously of their own time to organize, solicit, collect, and package food and coats which they then delivered to

Van Buren DHS. They collected and cleaned 80 coats and 1,600 pounds of food that was packaged into Thanksgiving food baskets. There were enough food baskets to feed 35 families.

Because of their volunteer efforts, Alcoa – which owns EPC – will donate \$3,000 to the Van Buren children's Christmas and summer camp projects. What a gift!



Pictured are the volunteers with a few of the coats and food they collected.

Ending autumn with fun, food and spirit

From Susan M. Lowe, Program Manager
Wayne County DHS Gratiot-7 Mile District, Detroit
LoweS@michigan.gov

The Gratiot-7 Mile district in Wayne County celebrated Halloween the old fashioned way. The day started out with a great breakfast for staff.

Each person who wanted to attend paid \$1 for a wonderful breakfast of sausage, bacon, grits, Danish, juice, cereal, bagels and fruit. In the afternoon at break time everyone put candy outside his or her booth in a Halloween decorated container. Staff went from booth to booth saying trick or treat and receiving yummy treats.

There were smiles on everyone's faces. Thanks go out to **Pat Cofield**, **Jackie Hunter**, **Monica Smith** and **Celesta Davis** for a job well done. They gave us all a day to remember. We look forward to the Christmas Festivities.



Clinton & Gratiot DHS offices welcomed "trick or treat" visitors from local day care & Head Start programs on Halloween day. Pictured is Gratiot eligibility specialist **Lorna Derry** (can you guess which one?) with children who stopped by her office. Staff in both counties were encouraged to dress up to greet the children as they walked through getting treats and bringing smiles and laughs to our respective offices. This has become an annual event in both counties with both staff and children having a hallow'n good time.
— from **Dan Carley**

Children of Agape visit Genesee County with assist by former employee African group touring U.S. to raise funds to rebuild their orphanage

From Barbara Ruptic Anders, District Manager
Genesee County DHS McCree District, Flint
AndersB@michigan.gov

Former Genesee County McCree employee **Delores Lyons**, who has since transferred to the Wayne County DHS Taylor District, visited the McCree District office with the "Children of Agape" Nov. 7. This group of 10 children range in age from 8-16. They are from South Africa and are touring the United States in a quest for funding to rebuild their orphanage destroyed by fire.

Delores became involved with the group when she visited Africa in the summer of 2004 to assist the orphanage. Her plans are to return next year to continue the project. These kids can really sing and have been acting as ambassadors for the Keep A Child Alive Foundation on behalf of 12 million AIDS orphans in Africa.

Delores's former unit put on a picnic lunch for the kids and the McCree District raised \$1,000 toward their cause. They need more than \$200,000 to rebuild their orphanage and have produced a CD to assist with the proceeds. It can be purchased for \$20 by visiting the Web sites www.friendsofagape.com, www.lovehallie.org, or www.simunyeoproject.com



Children of Agape performing during their visit to Flint in November.

DHS Matters! is a product of Michigan's Department of Human Services
Marianne Udow, Director • Karen Stock, Director, Office of Communications
Larry VanDeSande, editor • Submit stories by e-mail to: DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov